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**PUTTING THE GROUND DIMENSION INTO
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE DOCTRINE:**

**An Analysis of the Air Force's New Concept to Accomplish
the Force Protection Mission Following the
Khobar Towers Terrorist Bombing**

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHAEL C. VENDZULES
United States Air Force

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**PUTTING THE GROUND DIMENSION INTO UNITED STATES AIR
FORCE DOCTRINE: An Analysis of the Air Force's New
Concept to Accomplish the Force Protection Mission
Following the Khobar Towers Terrorist Bombing**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Michael C. Vendzules
United States Air Force

Colonel Linda Norman
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Michael C. Vendzules, Lt Col, United States Air Force

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Since aircraft were first used in war, before the United States Air Force (USAF) became a separate service, America has struggled with *who* and *how* to best protect airpower. As such, the attention given the Force Protection and Air Base Defense missions in the USAF has been sporadic at best. Unfortunately, it took a terrorist attack in 1996 to catapult the USAF into the post-cold war realization that their Force Protection Concept needed to be re-engineered. A fresh approach to address new threats—with a new strategy—new training—new technology—new organization—and new doctrine was needed. This paper reflects research to examine the USAF actions to fix the Force Protection mission since that fatal day at Khobar Towers. Did they finally get it right? The USAF has dramatically improved the way they accomplish the Force Protection mission. However, there is still room for improvement. To perform this analysis first some background history is offered to place the problem in its proper context. Next, courses of action are identified and examined

for relevance. Then, the contribution of the new Force Protection Program towards achieving the USAF Core Competencies and Strategic Vision is explored. Finally, in the conclusion some recommendations are offered in hopes of increasing the overall strength of the Force Protection Program in the USAF.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
Acknowledgement	vii
List of illustrations	ix
Putting the Ground Dimension in United States Air Force Doctrine: An Analysis of the Air Force's New Concept to Accomplish the Force Protection Mission Following the Khobar Towers Terrorist Bombing Incident	1
BACKGROUND	3
The Gulf War and the Rand Studies	6
POLICY OBJECTIVES	9
COURSES OF ACTION	11
RESOURCES	19
THE FUTURE	20
INTEGRATING THE SURFACE DIMENSION INTO AIR FORCE DOCTRINE	22
CONCLUSION	24
RECOMMENDATIONS	26
ENDNOTES	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1, Security Forces Flash Design.....14

**PUTTING THE GROUND DIMENSION IN UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
DOCTRINE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE AIR FORCE'S NEW CONCEPT TO
ACCOMPLISH THE FORCE PROTECTION MISSION FOLLOWING THE
KHOBAR TOWERS TERRORIST BOMBING INCIDENT**

We can't be the best at building airplanes...and second or third best at protecting our men and women.

—General Shalikashvili, CJCS, Nov 1996

What is Force Protection? The latest Department Defense definition states Force Protection is,

"A security program designed to protect service members, civilian employees, family members, facilities, and equipment, in all locations and situations, accomplished through planned and integrated application of combating terrorism, physical security, operations security, personal protective services, and supported by intelligence, counterintelligence, and other security programs."

The United States Air Force (USAF) recently made a dramatic strategic level policy change to the way the USAF will accomplish and prioritize the Force Protection mission. This major shift in policy is most observable following the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing. However, in actuality, the Khobar bombing and subsequent death of the 19 American Airmen really only accelerated ongoing efforts to redesign the Force Protection mission in a post-cold war era with its dynamic and uncertain environment and new emerging threats.¹ Since the

invention of the airplane, America has struggled with the *how* and *who* will be charged with protecting our air bases. Without question, the USAF's attempt to build a robust Force Protection program is a huge challenge. In many ways, this challenge also requires a culture change for some personnel and reshaping of the Air Force's organizational structure to assure its successful implementation. As such, this new USAF approach to force protection lends itself nicely to analysis using the *ends, ways, and means* framework.

This paper will examine the USAF's effort to execute the new force protection program. First, some background information is presented to form the foundation of this analysis and to place the new program in its proper context. Second, an analysis of the policy objectives (*ends*), courses of action (*ways*), and the resourcing to support the policy (*means*), and their *balance* is presented. Third, we will explore the application of the new program into the USAF future. How the Force Protection program contributes to Air Force Doctrine as well as the USAF Core Competencies and Strategic Vision is examined. This analysis will reveal any forces or trends expected to shape the future environment to include other major USAF concepts impacting upon the force protection program. Overall, it concludes that the Air Force has made dramatic progress in improving the security provided our Airmen and

airplanes. However, areas ripe for further development in order to reach the fullest dimensions of force protection are offered. Finally, some recommendations are made based upon this analysis in hopes of contributing to the overall strength of the Force Protection program. Let's begin by looking at the history of Force Protection and Air Base Defense in the USAF.

BACKGROUND

Security is like oxygen, when you have it you don't give it a second thought. When you don't have it, it's all you think about.

—Anonymous

Before the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing the Force Protection mission in the USAF had been left primarily to the Security Police as a career field. As such, the Force Protection concept in place at the time of Khobar was forged in the cold-war era and thus maintained a nuclear security emphasis. Peacetime Force Protection missions included such things as law enforcement and weapons system security, as well as, combat arms (marksmanship) instruction. Accordingly, these three functions were individual career specialties for the enlisted force. The USAF Force Protection wartime mission was Air Base Ground Defense (ABGD) and was executed by both Law Enforcement and Security specialists during conflict. The primary responsibility to provide ABGD, in the USAF, fell upon the Security Police. In fact, it's the wartime mission area of Air Base Defense that provides the rationale in the USAF for not privatizing or contracting most of

the peacetime missions performed by the Security Police—they must be available for deployment for contingencies and war.

During the Korean War, the Security Police (called Air Police then) ranks swelled from approximately 10,000 to 39,000 personnel to protect air bases. However, the war ended with no real conventional ground attacks against our aircraft or bases. Consequently, without any real doctrine to support this large base defense force, it was significantly reduced and returned to traditional law enforcement and system security functions.²

With the Vietnam War, a new threat emerged. In Vietnam, the enemy specifically targeted our Air Bases. Result—large numbers of aircraft damaged and destroyed by ground attacks. Once again, the USAF response was to dramatically increase the number and capabilities of the USAF security forces after the conflict was in full swing and damage had already been done.³ In addition, our Vietnam experience demonstrated that the Army could not always dedicate a force to air base security despite their overall responsibility to conduct land warfare. In fact, eventually General Westmoreland, Commander United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam, directed all services to provide their own base defense. The USAF leadership instituted the Safe Side Program and turned to the AF Security Police to perform the base defense mission with "Combat Security Police Squadrons".⁴ Unfortunately, after Vietnam, USAF leadership interest in base defense once again waned. Then, in

1984, the security police air base ground defense improvements fell victim to the Joint Service Agreement #8.

Joint Service Agreement #8, also known as the "31 Initiatives", was negotiated with the U.S. Army and was intended to assure the two services would develop joint procedures for rear area security.

While the USA and USAF agreed on basic joint procedures, problems arose within the Air Force itself. Unfortunately, senior USAF commanders interpreted the agreement as limiting the USAF responsibility for base defense to areas inside the base perimeter only. Outcome—funding cuts and no interest in defense "outside the wire." Specifically, this joint service agreement directed the Army to respond to base threats of less than battalion size with Military Police and with a tactical force for larger than Battalion size threats.⁵ Yet, the typical threat to Air Bases comes from platoon or smaller forces. If the Security Police must defeat these level threats they cannot be constrained to the base perimeter in developing their concepts of operation. In addition, often air bases are not located in areas where the USA is readily available. As a result, Base Defense and Force Protection were often neglected. Additionally, high operations tempo and force reductions resulted in twelve-hour shifts for SP personnel fully engaged in their peacetime law enforcement and security missions. Result—little or no time for ABGD training.

It's interesting to note that the strategic pauses between all U.S. conflicts since World War II had resulted in a downsizing and de-emphasizing of the Base Defense and Force Protection missions. Why? This was probably due at least in part to three common themes in combination—threat deprivation, no USAF base defense doctrine, and lack of senior leadership support. In fact, if not for the law enforcement and nuclear security peacetime manpower, available troops to perform wartime base defense would have been even more depleted. However, several recent, critical events would clearly indicate that the time had come to reevaluate the emphasis, importance, and prioritization of the ABGD wartime mission.

THE GULF WAR AND THE RAND STUDIES

It is easier and more effective to destroy the enemy's aerial power by destroying his nests and eggs on the ground than to hunt his flying birds in the air.

—Giulio Douhet 1921

Experiences of Desert Shield and Desert Storm demonstrated a new environment and threats to USAF resources in the post-Cold War world. Result—two comprehensive Rand Studies sounded a warning that major changes were needed to protect the force and these studies got the attention of the USAF senior leadership. The first Rand Study entitled, Snakes in the Eagle's Nest, provided a comprehensive history of ground attacks on Air Bases. It concludes that attacks by small forces have succeeded in destroying or damaging over 2,000

aircraft between 1940 and 1992. This is a sobering precedent for those responsible for defending USAF bases against this threat.⁸ Subsequently, the second-order effect of this study was that AF senior leadership stood up and took note of three facts. First, our aircraft were unequaled when in the air. Second, small forces using unsophisticated weapons had been very successful against aircraft on the ground in the past. Third, these lessons were not lost on our adversaries and terrorists, especially since the Gulf War.

The second Rand Study entitled, "Check Six Begins on the Ground", was part of a larger study on asymmetric strategies that future adversaries might use to counter U.S. air superiority. It asserts, that future adversaries, having watched the Gulf War, will be strongly inclined to reduce the effectiveness of air operations by destroying aircraft and disrupting sortie generation and in tandem weaken U.S. resolve by creating a strategic event.⁹ It concludes that defense of air bases has been traditionally viewed within the USAF as solely a Security Police problem—a mistake. Their contention was that defense of air assets should be more properly viewed as an airpower problem. Why? Because airpower is critical to national military strategy and the U.S. way of war.¹⁰ This study alarmed the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Fogelman, and he penned letters to the MAJCOM commanders describing the report as a,

"...timely, thought-provoking study which describes a very real and credible threat. The report certainly got my attention...and our bases are at risk. If we do

not pay attention to this area, we could be embarrassed by the loss of vital resources in the not too distant future."¹¹

General Fogleman then directed all the Numbered Air Force and Major Command Commanders to read the Rand report, identify areas within their commands that were vulnerable to the threat, and develop appropriate countermeasures to improve Force Protection. He agreed with the Rand assertion that Force Protection could not be relegated to the Security Police career field.

Finally, and for the first time, this credible threat was officially validated and the importance of the Force Protection mission expanded beyond the sole responsibility of a single career field. The USAF began to examine ways to balance necessary peacetime missions (such as law enforcement) against a more compelling wartime mission—Force Protection. However, despite this emphasis, progress was slow moving and resources scarce. One can not help but note that General Fogleman appears to predict the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing in his assessment.

Unfortunately tragedy strikes, on 25 Jun 96, when a truck bomb detonates at the housing facility for USAF personnel engaged in Operation Southern Watch, killing 19 and wounding hundreds of others. Just as the Rand Reports had warned—a small force using unsophisticated weaponry had created a strategic event. This catastrophe proved to be the watershed event to

catapult the USAF Force Protection Program into high gear.

Let's begin our analysis of the current Force Protection Program by using the ends, ways, and means paradigm and asking the following questions: What are the new Force Protection Program objectives? What are the courses of action (COA) to achieve the new objectives? Finally, what resources are provided to support the new USAF approach to accomplish the Force Protection mission?

POLICY OBJECTIVES

When those aircraft are sitting on a ramp in some far away country with that American flag on the tail they are not representing the United States of America, they are the United States of America.

—General Fogleman, USAF Chief of Staff

The USAF Force Protection Program objective is to safeguard military personnel, civilian employees, family members, facilities and equipment by integrating antiterrorism, physical security, and personal protective measures in all locations and situations.¹²

Simply put, these are the ends of the Force Protection Program. This new program objective grew mainly out of two critical endeavors in the aftermath of the Khobar failure—The Downing Report and the USAF response to the Downing Report—The Record Report. Retired General Wayne Downing prepared a report at the request of the Secretary of Defense William J. Perry to assess the circumstances surrounding the bombing. Eventually, the SECDEF sent the report to Congress and the

President with a letter stating, "The Khobar attack points the way to a radically new mind-set and dramatic changes in the way we protect our forces deployed overseas...we will place the threat of terrorism front and center."¹³

Following the release of this report, the Secretary of the Air Force directed Lt. General James F. Record to consider and make recommendations on issues raised in the Downing Report regarding how the USAF organizes, trains and equips forces deployed with a focus on Force Protection. Consequently, the 81 page Record Report used the Downing Report as a point of departure and provided the center of gravity for the USAF program direction. It makes 33 major recommendations. Early on, under the heading of Major Observations, the report dramatically influences the direction of the new USAF program by addressing the new threat, a need for an Air Force culture change, and force restructuring to assure success. It states,

"...as a result of the successes in Desert Storm, coupled with American dominance in the skies, terrorists have focused on vulnerabilities on the ground. As a result, the AF can no longer consider overseas locations as risk-free sanctuaries from which to operate. The AF must institutionalize a completely different Force Protection mind-set. The AF must inculcate this new mind-set into every service member through all levels of education and training, from accession to separation. Further, an enduring organizational structure must be established that will ensure force protection remains on course through frequent reviews which address threat dynamics."¹⁴

What does this mean? From these reports, the USAF Force Protection Program objectives emerged and are identified by way of a *Strategic Vision*—in other words what Force Protection should be is articulated. As per the paradigm, we now have a Strategic Vision and the Program Objectives. In addition, the newly identified threat serves to *legitimize* the Strategic Vision. Yet, a *decisive authority* was needed to implement the COAs and accomplish the program objectives—enter Brigadier General Richard A. Coleman, director of USAF Security Forces. As required, he was personally charged with providing the resource advocacy, and policy guidance on the full range of Force Protection issues. As such, it was his responsibility to execute the appropriate COAs. How? He achieved this by creating a *symbiosis* between the Strategic Vision and his decisive authority—a rare but necessary *confluence* if the program is to succeed.

COURSES OF ACTION

Every man in an Air Force Uniform ought to be armed with something—a rifle, a tommy-gun, a pistol, a pike, or a mace;...Every airman should have his place in the defence scheme...It must be understood by all ranks that they are expected to fight and die in defence of their airfields.

—Winston Churchill, 1941

The following COAs (in bold print) were implemented to achieve the stated objectives—these are the ways. **COA 1: First, the USAF**

senior leadership officially recognized that Force Protection was a primary USAF mission and everyone's business—not just the Security Police forces. No longer would the Security Police career field be low density and high tempo as sole proprietor of the force protection mission. The Air Force finally recognized that they must instill the warrior spirit in all personnel and begin this indoctrination in Basic Military Training. General Coleman urged this approach, in 1990, when as a student at the Army War College he observed,

"The Air Force is a superb trainer and educator of aviators and the technicians who support and maintain aircraft and missiles. On the other hand the Air Force neglects the basic military skills so common in other services. No where is this more evident than in the lack of common and basic soldier craft found in the Air Force basic military training courses for both officers and enlisted personnel. The Army, Navy and Marine Corps teach a common skill. The Army and Marine basic training programs turn out a basic rifleman with a fundamental knowledge of tactics at the fire team or squad level. Navy basic training produces a sailor trained in the basic skills of fighting the ship—damage control, survival at sea, and ship security. These basic skills are taught to each member of these services, regardless of their future military occupation. Airman move on to their career courses and bases without being prepared to contribute to the defense of their bases."¹⁵

Now at last, Air Force basic training finally includes a field training experience to instill the warfighting spirit in our trainees familiarizing them with aerospace expeditionary force protection and self defense concepts. As such, base defense tactics taught include camp mobility processing, camouflage, perimeter security, camp fortification, nuclear, biological and chemical training, self-aid

and buddy care, as well as M-16 weapons. In addition, trainees are put through the rigors of a field environment confidence course.¹⁶

COA 2: The Security Police career field was renamed Security Forces. This action emphasized the Force Protection mission and not the peacetime "policing" aspects the former name implied, thus shaping the culture by placing emphasis upon a wartime primacy.

COA 3: The separate enlisted career fields of law enforcement, security, and combat arms were operationally merged into one single career field—Security Forces. This action moved the career field more in line with the Air Force policy of producing generalists and not specialists while at the same time improving teamwork and unit cohesion—one team, one primary mission—Force Protection. In addition, the technical training skills of Combat Arms and Military Working Dog handlers were preserved as special experience identifiers.

COA 4: The Air Force Chief of Staff approved a new Security Forces cloth beret flash design. To further cement the single career field, this new flash design was taken from the heraldry of the Vietnam era Safeside Operations whose mission it was to provide the Air Force with a worldwide ground defense capability. This was a perfect symbol to represent the current Force Protection mission while tying it to and anchoring it in a proud past. The flash motto, Defensor Fortis means: "Defender of the Force."



Figure 1
Security Forces Flash Design

COA 5: A complete review of all training conducted at the Security Forces Academy was accomplished. A series of comprehensive Utilization and Training Workshops (Air Education and Training Command construct for validating new training requirements) were held to facilitate the merger and determine the best training program to assure Force Protection. This endeavor required a major and complete overhaul of all training programs, many still mired in the cold-war era. Now, the new Security Forces Academy training programs reflect a single, united security forces career field, with a new primary wartime mission. It also incorporates the new asymmetric threats in training scenarios and field exercises. This huge effort resulted in an entirely new interim and long-term training programs for the Security Forces Academy and USAF Air Base Defense Training Detachment at Camp Bullis, Texas.

COA 6: A geographic center of gravity for the Security Forces career field was needed to produce the synergistic effect and energy

needed to sustain the progress. Lackland Air Force Base was chosen to synergize the career field force protection strategy. Why? Because the USAF Basic Military Training, Security Forces Academy, Military Working Dog school, as well as a large local Security Forces squadron were already based there. Also in San Antonio, is the Air Intelligence Agency. Subsequently, the next three organizational COAs found homes at Lackland Air Force Base.

COA 7: The 820th Security Forces Group is activated. In November 1996, the Air Force Chief of Staff directed the Air Force Security Police (now Security Forces) to "...develop a force protection field organization, the Air Force Protection Group, to integrate force protection programs. The organization is to provide trained and ready forces to deploy base force protection capabilities."¹⁷ Then, on 17 Mar 97, the 820th Security Forces Group was activated by General Fogelman. Its mission-to provide a highly-trained, rapidly-deployable "first-in" force protection capability to any operating location, in support of the USAF Global Engagement mission. This is a multi-functional unit that is trained, organized, and equipped to provide deployed Force Protection ranging in scope from military operations other than war, to major regional conflicts. Designed for rapid movement, the unit coupled with its security forces flights and heavy weapons elements, is capable of deploying within 24 hours of notification-a first of its type in USAF history.¹⁸ The primary focus of the 820th Group is to provide force protection for the Aerospace

Expeditionary Force. Consequently, when the 820th Group arrives at any forward location, they will conduct an immediate assessment of force protection requirements to ensure a secure operational environment for personnel and resources. Then, this secure environment represents a tactical area of responsibility that is based on the key factors of unit mission, posited enemy characteristics, time, troops, and terrain.¹⁹ The Force Protection Group has proceeded with its "proof of concept" when it successfully saw its first real world action in support of Bright Star 97, Air Expeditionary Force V & VI, Desert Thunder and Desert Fox. However, it's important to note that the squadrons of Force Protection personnel are not permanently assigned to the 820th Group. Rather, these forces report to the 820th Group Commander when mobilized for a contingency. Unfortunately, this means these troops are not dedicated to the Force Protection Group Headquarters on a permanent, day-to-day basis.

COA 8: The USAF Force Protection Battlelab stands up. One of only six battlelabs in the USAF, it was fully operational by October 1997. The Force Protection battlelab's mission is to, "Identify innovative concepts and systems to execute the Force Protection mission and to explore and integrate technology, tactics and training to increase readiness."²⁰ As such, the battlelab focuses on refining a wide variety of force protection concepts, principles, and doctrine. Through studies and analysis, participation with other

battlelabs, interaction with Air Staff and major policy makers, and utilization of state-of-the-art simulations, the battlelab works through force protection concepts, providing expertise in evaluating proposed changes to doctrine.²¹ More later in this paper on the battlelab role involving Force Protection in Air Force Doctrine development.

COA 9: Activation of the Air Force Security Forces Center.

This Air Staff level, cross-functional agency provides the leadership and advocacy for the total Force Protection package. The Center is manned by a staff of experts from security forces, intelligence, Special Investigations, Royal Air Force Regiment, U.S. Army, and is supported by numerous other organizations. The Security Forces Center's mission is to: Organize, train, and equip Air Force security forces for worldwide deployment; explore new force protection concepts and ensure doctrine, policies, plans, programs, and resources are in place to execute peacetime, wartime, and contingency missions for nuclear and non-nuclear security, air base defense, combat arms, law enforcement, and corrections; and DoD Executive Agent for military working dogs.²²

Let's review the synergistic effect of these force protection enablers located in one geographic area-Lackland Air Force Base. First, basic military training provides future force protection assets and begins instilling the warrior spirit and military culture in new recruits. Next, the Security Forces Academy provides the new

enlisted and officer accessions with the recently re-engineered Force Protection training program. This program includes Air Base Defense training at Camp Bullis which maintains a grenade assault course, military operations in urban terrain site, and field training exercise areas. Between Lackland and Camp Bullis ranges, weapons training capabilities include: M-9 pistol; shotgun; M-16 rifle; M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon; M-60 machinegun; 50-caliber machinegun; grenade launcher; M-19 machinegun grenade launcher; Light Anti-tank Weapon; claymore mines; and 81mm Mortar. In addition, the military working dog school trains handlers and military working dogs for force protection and anti-terrorism operations. Also, the Force Protection Battlelab injects the technical innovation and future perspective into the overall process. Then, the 820th Force Protection Group maintains the operational "first-in" capability to execute the force protection mission in support of USAF Global Engagement. Finally, the Security Forces Center provides the leadership and Force Protection Program advocacy necessary to assure it all works—and keeps on working.

It's no accident that these symbiotic relationships are a natural phenomenon created by the common location and missions of these force protection units all in one place. Personnel from all of these organizations support and learn from one another. Now, let's explore the resources available to support the program.

RESOURCES

The ends, ways, and means paradigm asserts that evidence your Strategic Vision is of critical interest is best observed by the *means* available to support it. One can declare that something is critical but if in reality it's under-resourced, then the interest is really only peripheral—not critical. When there is an obvious vision/resource mismatch—it creates a credibility problem. This, in turn, relegates any voiced support to the status of rhetoric. So far, it's clear that support goes far beyond rhetoric. In fact, much evidence exists to demonstrate that the *means* do exist for achieving this program's stated Force Protection objectives. For instance, the creation of these new organizations and their associated facilities, manpower and equipment speak volumes about the depth of the leadership commitment. Other efforts also indicate dedicated support. For example, a state-of-the-art Tactical Automated Sensor System was considered essential for the force protection mission in Southwest Asia. Consequently, the USAF Chief of Staff signed a compelling need statement in order to by-pass the normal, time consuming procurement process for this emergency. Result: A detection system was funded and fielded in record time.

Likewise, Security Forces entry-level manpower was below acceptable levels. Outcome: USAF senior leaders added new accessions to the Security Force roles filling the training academy to maximum capacity—even at the expense of other career fields. In addition,

the new interim security forces training course was actually resourced between funding cycles. Without a doubt, USAF senior leadership demonstrated a commitment to fix the Force Protection for the Air Force—no vision/resource mismatch here.

Perhaps most important, there appears to be a balance between the ends, ways, and means of the USAF Force Protection Program approach—an absolute necessity for continued program success in accordance with the paradigm. However, risks remain. One challenge is maintaining the program momentum and funding as we distance ourselves in time from the Khobar Towers tragedy. In addition, other important USAF programs could jeopardize this effort as they compete for shrinking dollars. Another risk involves the tendency for the Force Protection mission to slip back into being a single career field endeavor as was the case before Khobar. Finally, there are the problems associated with maintaining program energy during any strategic pause. How will the Force Protection Program look in the future?

THE FUTURE

At the very heart of war lies doctrine. It represents the central beliefs for waging war in order to achieve victory. It is the building material for strategy. It is fundamental to sound judgment.

—General Curtis LeMay, USAF

According to CJCS Joint Vision 2010, Full-Dimensional Protection is control of the battlespace to ensure our forces can maintain

freedom of action during deployment, maneuver, and engagement, while providing multi-layered defenses for our forces and facilities at all levels.²³ The USAF future is guided by the new strategic vision called, Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force. While each service may maintain certain elements of airpower—there is only one Air Force for America. As such, it is the Air Force's central responsibility to develop, organize, train, equip, sustain, and integrate air and space power to meet the needs of the Nation. The USAF Strategic Vision identifies six Core Competencies that must be provided to the nation: Air and Space Superiority; Information Superiority; Global Attack; Precision Engagement; Rapid Global Mobility; and Agile Combat Support.²⁴ It could be argued that Force Protection cuts across all USAF Core Competencies and enables air and space power to contribute to the attainment of National Strategic Objectives. Yet, Force Protection is not just a matter of air base operability. It's much more. It involves the redesign of our combat and support forces to reduce the size of the Force Protection problem. Clearly, this improves responsiveness, deployability and sustainability of our forces.²⁵

The USAF concept for achieving this end is the Aerospace Expeditionary Forces or AEF. AEF are wings, groups, or squadrons attached to a task force or in-place Numbered Air Force specifically tailored against threats and missions. As such, the AEF concept is anchored in the Joint Vision 2010 and USAF Vision of Global

Engagement. In this regard, it could be said the AEF is the engine to achieve the six USAF core competencies. When these expeditionary forces are deployed, the Force Protection mission must be part of the process.

INTEGRATING THE SURFACE DIMENSION INTO AIR FORCE DOCTRINE

Does Air Force doctrine fall short in incorporating surface dimension actions into the air commander's repertoire? A recent Battlelab analysis seems to support this assertion. It states,

"Currently, the Air Force has no integrated surface dimension doctrine and no long term strategy that addresses and integrates all requirements, applies to all missions at all locations, and covers the entire continuum of conflict for the total force. An integrated, fused and focused Force Protection Construct is the vehicle to dominate the surface dimension and achieve Full Spectrum Dominance. The construct is a systems approach to managing the Force Protection of an Air Force Major Command, theater, base, area, and facility by taking measures geared toward reducing vulnerability and managing risk. It is used by all commanders at all levels of their area of responsibility. It applies in peacetime, contingency, and wartime operations, and is comprised of four key elements, which are always employed, regardless of the threat, mission, or location. As such, the construct never changes—only the intensity of effort increase as the threat escalates. The four key elements are: Force Protection Zones, Force Protection Areas, Risk Management, and Force Protection Measures, with the end-state objective of Full-Dimensional Protection."²⁶

The Force Protection Construct illustration follows.

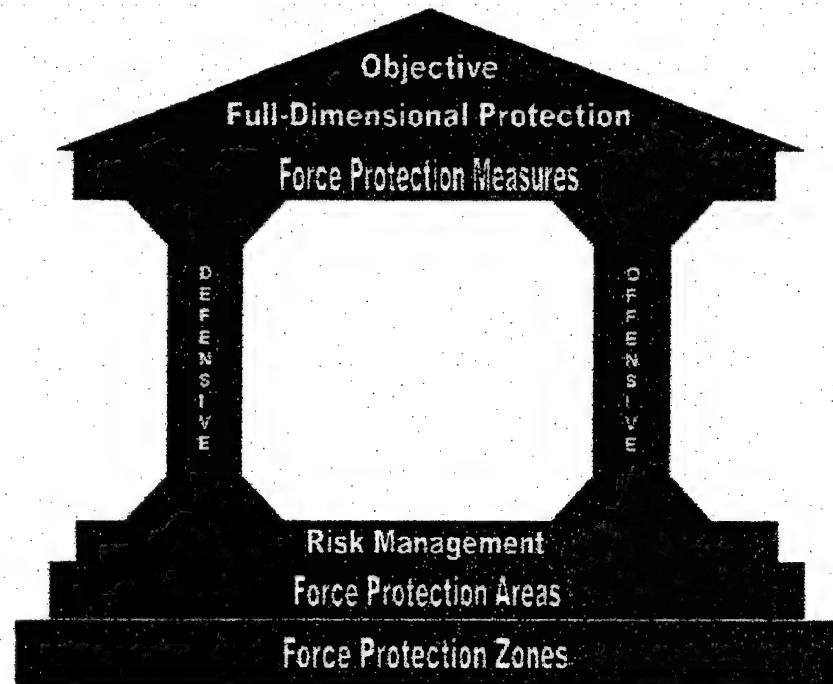


Figure 2
Force Protection Construct

Doctrine

Current Air Force doctrine does not consider the Surface Dimension of the battlespace. The latest version of Basic Air Force Doctrine (1997) makes no reference to Force Protection despite it being one of the major recommendations of the Record Report on Khobar Towers. The Air Force has not provided the guidance for assets where they are most vulnerable--on the surface. The USAF Force Protection Battlelab identifies the problem and makes a recommendation that makes sense. The battlelab states,

"The fundamental problem is the Air Force treats Force Protection as a program instead of an enabler of surface dimension dominance. Therefore, change the Air Force Doctrine Document 1, Air Force Basic Doctrine, by adding Force Protection as a Core Competency. This will promote a 'Full-Dimensional Protection' mindset at all levels. Force Protection is the key enabler to the surface dimension, which is the enabler of the other Air Force Core Competencies. Without Force Protection, we can never achieve 'Global Engagement.' We need to view Force Protection as a strategic, operational, and tactical mission requirement. Based upon the changing environment and the evolution of the transnational threat and asymmetrical niche warfare, we must produce a culture dedicated to not only the aerospace dimension of Full-Dimensional Protection, but the surface dimension as well."²⁷

The Force Protection Battlelab clearly believes they have discovered a "gap" in current Air Force Doctrine. This gap is created by the emergence of new asymmetrical threats that must be addressed. In attempting to determine the level of acceptance of this assertion and recommendation, the Air Staff Force Protection Division Chief was contacted. Colonel John Salley indicated that the initiative, to include Full-Dimensional Protection, would be considered as a subject for inclusion at the 1 Oct 99 AF Doctrine Working Group's rewrite conference.²⁸

CONCLUSION

The bottom line—the United States Air Force has dramatically improved the way it accomplishes the Force Protection Mission. As late as Jun 96, the USAF Force

Protection program was in "critical condition." Force Protection and Air Base Defense concepts were still postured against a cold-war era threat. Protection of the force was left up to one career field. Appropriate funding, resources, organizational structure, culture, and senior officer sponsorship were all lacking. Since that time, the USAF has emerged from "intensive care" in excellent condition by totally re-engineering the Force Protection Program. Training programs and real-world contingencies are now postulated against the full vulnerability spectrum to include the asymmetrical threat. Resources and manpower have been increased to execute the Force Protection mission. In addition, the Air Force re-organized to improve its Force Protection capability under the AEF concept. The Security Forces merged three career fields, generated a synergy at one base, and created an entirely new organization to provide a first-rate, first in Force Protection capability for the USAF. Also, the Force Protection Battlelab is working hard towards getting Force Protection included in Air Force Doctrine.

This paper was organized to provide a history of Force Protection and Air Base Defense in order to place the force protection problem into proper context and to provide the foundation for analysis. Next, the Khobar Towers terrorist bombing and subsequent investigations are reviewed as recent events impacting the USAF Force Protection Program. In addition,

its influence on a new Force Protection concept was explained. Then, using the *ends, ways, and means* paradigm the Air Force's new policy objectives and Courses of Action to fix the Force Protection Program shortfalls were examined. In addition, this paper explored how the Force Protection mission contributes to the USAF's Core Competencies and Strategic Vision. Finally, current efforts to integrate the surface dimension of Force Protection into formal Air Force Doctrine are identified.

It's interesting to note that the Wright Brothers needed three capabilities in order to fly—propulsion (thrust), lift, and controllability. Perhaps the same capabilities were needed for the USAF Force Protection Mission to finally "fly." It needed the "propulsion" provided by the new post-cold war threats—with Khobar Towers supplying the "afterburner" thrust. Then, it needed the "lift" provided by the new resources allocated to the Force Protection mission change. Lastly, controllability was provided by way of the USAF senior leadership support. All that is needed now is the "fuel" to keep the program flying. No doubt, this could be provided by doctrinal inclusion and core competency recognition of Force Protection thus providing the energy to keep the program going.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Without question the current USAF Force Protection program matches the threat and is achieving stated objectives per the

requirements of the ends, ways, and means paradigm. However, there is room for improvement and, as previously mentioned, some challenges and risks remain. Here are some recommendations.

Training Recommendations: Continue to expand the warrior culture and start with recruitment policies. In today's USAF everyone must be a force protector and base defender. Let's arm our Air Force and begin day one of basic training. For starters, assign the basic trainee a M16 rifle and have them keep and carry it until completion of training. Then, these trainees will further develop the warrior spirit as they clean, care for, and secure their rifles. Consequently, they will arrive at their first duty station with value added and able to complement the base defense force as members of the armed services. Replace the Security Forces Academy interim training program with a full-up and fully funded version as soon as possible.

Readiness Recommendations: Permanently assign two full-time, dedicated squadrons of force protection personnel to the 820th Force Protection Group Headquarters. These troops must train together on a daily basis. Then, only deploy Force Protection teams in no less than 13-person squads and preferably 44-person flights to maintain team integrity, leadership and cohesiveness.

Doctrinal Recommendations: Embrace the Force Protection Construct to control the ground dimension of the battlespace. Then, recognize and incorporate the surface dimension fully into Air Force

Basic Doctrine. Finally, make Force Protection the seventh USAF Core Competency.

Lastly, proliferate the Force Protection contribution to the USAF Strategic Vision, Doctrine, and Core Competencies at all levels in order to achieve the most secure environment for our people and planes.

WORD COUNT = 5,982

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³ Ibid., 8.

⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵ Richard G. Davis, The 31 Initiatives: A Study in Air Force and Army Cooperation. Office of the Air Force History, Washington D.C. 1979. 109.

⁶ Alan Vick, Snakes in the Eagle's Nest: A History of Ground Attacks on Air Bases (Santa Monica, California: Rand Publishing, 1995), 110.

⁷ David A. Shlapak, Alan Vick, "Check Six begins on the ground": Responding to the Evolving Ground Threat to U.S. Air Force Bases (Santa Monica, California: Rand Publishing, 1995), summary xiii.

⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁹ Chief of Staff USAF General Ronald R. Fogleman, letter for Air Combat Command Commander General Joseph W. Ralston regarding report *Check Six Begins on the Ground*, Washington, D.C., 5 October 1995.

¹⁰ Air Force Issues Book 1997, 12.

¹¹ Air Force News. DOD Announces New Military Force Protection Measures. Available from <http://www.at.mil/cgr-bin/multigate/retrieve?u=z3950r://dtics11:1024/airforce!F70401.../htm>. Internet. Accessed 5 October 1998, 1.

¹² LtGen James F. Record Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing, (31 October 1996), 3

¹³ Richard A. Coleman, Lieutenant Colonel, "USAF AIR BASES: NO SAFE SANCTUARY. ARMY WAR COLLEGE STUDY PROJECT. (Carlisle Barracks, PA., 1990) 15-16.

¹⁴ Ken Wright, Technical Sergeant USAFR, "Returning to Rigor: Basic Training Gets Down and Dirty." Airman Magazine, March 1999, 48.

¹⁵ CSAF Message Date Time Group 150911Z Nov 96.

¹⁶ Congressional Issue Paper: Force Protection 1998. Secretary of the Air Force Legislative Liaison Office 21 July 1998. 11.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸ Air Force News, 2.

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²³ USAF Force Protection Battlelab Paper: "Integrating the Surface Dimension Into Air Force Doctrine," (12 March 1998)7.

²⁴ Ronald R. Fogelman, General, "A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force" published speech delivered to the to the Heritage Foundation, Washington, 13 December 1996. 6.

²⁵ Air Force Issues Book 1997, 14.

²⁶ USAF Force Protection Battlelab Paper: "Integrating the Surface Dimension Into Air Force Doctrine." 7-15.

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